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Greetings Jeremy Grimes

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

POLICING & POLICY

US Lawmakers Seek More Prominent Markings On Toy Guns

Newsweek (6/11) reports, "Three Democratic U.S. Senators are calling on the Commerce Department to more effectively regulate look-alike firearms, a category that encompasses toy guns and other products whose appearance imitates a real weapon." Newsweek adds, "Current regulations only require that 'toy' or 'imitation' firearms be equipped with a 'blaze orange plug inserted in the barrel' in order to help onlookers distinguish that product from an actual firearm." In a letter to the Commerce Department and the US Consumer Product Safety Commission on Monday, Senators Bob Menendez, Ed Markey and Richard Blumenthal "wrote that it is 'past due time' to update the department's toy gun regulations, which date back to 1989."

Seattle Program Offers Drug Users Help Rather Than Charges

The Washington Post (6/11, A1, Jouvenal) reports Seattle last year launched a program offering drug users help with counseling and housing instead of charging them for possessing small amounts of drugs. Through the program, "many people who once would have been locked up are now immediately offered help." The Post says "Seattle's new model has been hailed by criminal justice reformers as a humane alternative to the punitive drug policies of the '80s and '90s they blame for exploding prison populations, devastating minority communities and doing little to curb drug abuse." However, "It has also spurred controversy, swept up in an acrimonious debate in the city over how to handle a large homeless population that is, in part, fueled by addiction."

Jon Stewart Decries Inaction On 9/11 Victims Fund

The New York Post (6/11, Schwab) reports "former 'The Daily Show' host Jon Stewart shamed members of a House panel Tuesday when only five lawmakers were seated in the rostrum to hear survivors of the Sept. 11 terror attacks testify about the need to reauthorize the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund." Said Stewart, "As I sit here today, I can't help but think what an incredible metaphor this room is for the entire process that getting health care and benefits for 9/11 first responders has come to. ... Behind me a filled room of 9/11 first responders and in front of me a nearly empty Congress. ... Shameful. It's an embarrassment to the country and a stain on this institution and you should be ashamed of yourselves."

Hillsborough, Florida Deputies To Learn How To De-Escalate Mental Health Crises

The Tampa Bay (FL) Times (6/11, Marrero) reports that the Hillsborough County, Florida Sheriff's Office "is revamping the training program that teaches deputies how to handle people in the throes of a mental health crisis." According to the Times, "The biggest change: The agency's 40-hour crisis intervention training is no longer voluntary for patrol and detention deputies." Now "it's mandatory training for the entire force of about 2,400 sworn deputies." The Times adds, "The program's curriculum will also be updated with the help of local mental health experts, said Sheriff Chad Chronister, to ensure the new training is relevant to the situations that deputies are dealing with on the streets and in the jail."

The 2019 IACP/Target Police Officer of the Year Award application is open! As the most prestigious law enforcement award of the IACP, the Police Officer of the Year award recognizes outstanding and heroic achievement among police officers across the globe, highlighting the sacrifices made daily by law enforcement's finest. Nomination deadline is June 24th. To apply, visit http://www.login2apply.com.

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CRIME & DRUGS

FBI Helping Dominican Authorities In Investigation Into Americans' Deaths

ABC News (6/11, Wash, Hutchinson) reports, "The Federal Bureau of Investigation is now helping to probe the deaths of three Americans who perished under mysterious circumstances in a five-day span at neighboring resorts in the Dominican Republic, officials said Tuesday." According to ABC News, "Dominican authorities asked for the FBI's help in conducting toxicology analysis in the investigations stemming from the deaths at the luxury destinations run by the Bahia Principe Hotels & Resorts, according to the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo. 'The safety of U.S. citizens that live in, work in, and visit the Dominican Republic remains our highest priority,' Robin Bernstein, the U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, said in a statement. 'These incidents are tragic and we offer our deepest condolences to those personally impacted.'" FBI officials "have informed Dominican authorities that getting results of the toxicology analysis could take up to 30 days."

FBI Probing Minneapolis Funeral Shooting

The Minneapolis Star Tribune (6/11, Jany) reports, "Acting on a tip that someone was planning to shoot up a funeral in north Minneapolis on Monday, law enforcement officers set up surveillance at Estes Funeral Home to try to head off violence," but "gunfire still rang out in the parking lot of Estes, in the Willard-Hay neighborhood, with bullets striking and wounding two men as funeralgoers ducked for cover." According to the Star Tribune, "Witnesses said the shooter jumped into a white Lincoln Navigator that was seen fleeing the scene shortly after the shooting stopped." A passenger "was taken to the hospital to be treated for a gunshot wound," and the driver "was later booked into the county jail on suspicion of fleeing police in a vehicle." The Star Tribune adds, "Members of the FBI's Safe Streets Task Force had been surveilling the proceedings after learning about a possible gang-related shooting, according to court filings," and "when the gunfire started, several task force agents followed the suspect vehicle."

Authorities Arrest Eight, Seize 100 Dogs In Bust Of Florida Dogfighting Ring

The Tallahassee (FL) Democrat (6/11, Cromartie) reports from Quincy, Florida, "Eight people in Florida are facing more than 80 federal charges in connection with a 'large-scale,' illegal dog fighting ring involving about 100 dogs." The Gadsden Sheriff's Office and US Attorney Larry Keefe's office announced the indictments on Tuesday. According to the indictment "the defendants bred, housed, trained and fought pit bulls and pit bull-type dogs. They communicated with each other by telephone and text messages about the transporting, delivering, exchanging and selling of the animals, and the location of fights held around the county. A 'cooperating source' helped with the investigation."

Maryland Police Arrest 58 In Nationwide Probe Of Sex Predators

The Baltimore Sun (6/11, Condon) reports, "Authorities have arrested 58 people in Maryland over the past two months as part of a nationwide operation targeting child sexual exploitation." According to the Sun, "Officials from the Maryland Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force focused on individuals who possessed, manufactured or distributed child pornography, or engaged in online enticement of children for sexual purposes, according to a Maryland State Police news release." Authorities "also investigated child prostitution and human trafficking, the release stated. Most of the Maryland arrests were made in relation to child pornography, said state police spokesperson Brenda Carl."

TECHNOLOGY

Dark Web Drug Sellers Resist Police Crackdowns

The New York Times (6/11, Popper) reports US and European authorities "recently staged a wide-ranging crackdown on

online drug markets, taking down Wall Street Market and Valhalla, two of the largest drug markets on the so-called dark web." However, "there are still close to 30 illegal online markets, according to DarknetLive, a news and information site for the dark web." The Times says "the fight against online drug sales is starting to resemble the war on drugs in the physical world: There are raids. Sites are taken down; a few people are arrested. And after a while the trade and markets pop up somewhere else."

Experts Say CBP Breach Shows Law Enforcement's Vulnerability

Fortune (6/11, Newcomb) reports, "U.S. Customs and Border Protection collects a trove of data about travelers including photos, fingerprints, and details about social media accounts," and "officials argue that the information helps prevent terrorists from entering the country, but it also opens the door to a serious problem: Hackers." The CBP "hammered the point home on Monday by disclosing a breach of as many as 100,000 license plate photos and images of travelers at one point of entry." Cybersecurity experts "say it all comes down to a simple rule: The more data someone collects, the bigger the target it is for theft," and "as law enforcement begins to deploy and depend on new technology, such as facial recognition, it will have to walk a fine line in balancing innovation with privacy."

GLOBAL SECURITY

DC Man Arrested On Drug Charges Turned Out To Be ISIS Sympathizer

The Daily Beast (6/11, Arciga) reports, "A D.C. man arrested for drug charges earlier this month turned out to be an alleged ISIS sympathizer who was formerly under FBI scrutiny, according to court documents filed Tuesday." Jeremy Stevenson "was charged with two counts of meth distribution and another two counts of using a phone to traffic drugs earlier this month," and "in a motion for pre-trial detention, prosecutors claimed Stevenson was a threat to the community and a flight risk due to his relations to ISIS efforts." The Daily Beast adds, "His internet searches from 2017 allegedly showed that he looked up 'how to join ISIS,' and 'ISIS cut off police head.'" Stevenson "sat down for two interviews with the FBI in the summer of 2017, in which he allegedly defended the terror group's practice of beheading and likened the practice to the death penalty in the U.S. criminal justice system."

London Terror Police Arrest Man Allegedly Linked To Pakistan Group

Bloomberg (6/11, Elser) reports, "London terror police arrested a man Tuesday as part of a probe into speeches that encouraged criminal activity." According to Bloomberg, "The man, who is in his 60s, was arrested in northwest London on suspicion of intentionally encouraging or assisting offenses, police said in an emailed statement." The probe "is looking at speeches made by an individual associated with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Pakistan." The man "was taken to a south London police station, where he currently remains in custody." The investigation "is being led by officers from the Met's Counter Terrorism Command, and is looking at a speech broadcast in August 2016 by an individual associated with the MQM movement in Pakistan as well as other speeches previously broadcast by the same person."

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Former UK Gang Leader Thanks Police For "Another Chance At Life"

BBC News Online (UK) (6/12) reports, "An ex-gang leader who served 10 years in prison for a shooting has thanked the police chief who locked him up." Carlus Grant "once ran what police called Derby's most violent criminal gang and was put behind bars in 2009," and "meeting Derbyshire Constabulary's then Ch Supt Andy Hough he said his jail time helped him change his ways." BBC News adds, "Now Mr Grant advises organisations on gang culture and warns young people of being 'groomed' into a life of crime and violence." According to BBC News, "A decade ago the 34-year-old had a dangerous reputation and headed up the notorious A1 Crew," but "having served his sentence at HMP Grendon – a therapeutic community prison – he said he has 'another chance at life.'"

TUESDAY'S LEAD STORIES

- **Vermont Governor Vetoes Creation Of 24-Hour Waiting Period For Handgun Purchases**
- **Another Suspect Arrested In Killing Of Five On Washington Reservation**
- **Helicopter Crash In New York City Sparks Major Law Enforcement Response**

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